

Rural & Frontier Health Division Update

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Welcome to the tenth issue of the "Rural and Frontier Health Division Update!" This newsletter is provided as an informational source on activities involving the programs and services within the division. Comments and/or suggestions are welcomed and may be addressed to WDH-RFHD@health.wyo.gov.

Office of Rural Health



HRSA Office of Performance Review Grantee Performance Review Schedule for 2009:

ORH Performance Review: The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Office of Performance Review (OPR) Denver Regional Division staff conducted this review with the Wyoming Office of Rural Health (ORH) during August and September, 2009. This performance review focused on three of the HRSA funded grant programs: the Primary Care Office (PCO), the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) and the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex).

During the onsite portion of the review, several stakeholders participated in the group discussions of each performance objective. The participants and stakeholders included two ORH staff members, staff from the Rural and Frontier Health Division, the grantee's project officers from HRSA's Office of Rural Health and Bureau of Health Professions, the OPR team, Vice President of the Wyoming Hospital Association (WHA), and the Executive Director of the Wyoming Primary Care Association (WYPCA). The performance objectives chosen for the review were:

- 1) Develop a Work Plan that defines the roles and responsibilities of Wyoming Health Resources Network, Inc., (WHRN), ORH, and WYPCA regarding healthcare professional recruitment
- 2) Conduct a needs assessment and data gathering among Rural Health Clinics (RHC's)
- 3) Develop and implement strategies for better community presence

Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Grant:

For the annual period ending August 31, 2009, a total of \$222,859 was awarded to critical access hospitals and healthcare organizations across the state. These funds were effectively used to:

- Support Critical Access Hospitals
- Support conversion to Critical Access Hospital
- Support operations of the Wyoming Critical Access Hospital Network

- Provide web-based Quality Health Indicators (QHI) benchmarking project
- Facilitate strategic planning and update State Rural Health Plan
- Provide nurse leadership training
- Support Healthcare Quality in Rural America Multi-State Hospital Quality/Performance Improvement Project

Additionally, the grant focuses on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Integration. Flex funds for this same period supported:

- Two (EMS) leadership courses
- Two Rural Trauma Team Development and/or Comprehensive Advanced Life Support courses
- Forty-five EMS managers trained
- Twenty-five Medical Directors and CEOs attended the Rural Trauma Medical Director Course taught by National Trauma Foundation
- Twenty Hospital Trauma Coordinators attended the Trauma Registry class

Our collaborative efforts have helped advance the quality of healthcare services in Wyoming. Thanks for your participation and support!

Wyoming Health Workforce Reports:

The Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho (WWAMI) Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) has developed *Data snapshots: Wyoming healthcare providers, 2009*, a series of fact sheets on physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, pharmacists, dentists, psychologists, licensed professional counselors, licensed clinical social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists, and licensed addiction therapists. The WWAMI CHWS has also developed a report on *Workforce challenges in delivering healthcare to elderly and low-income populations in Wyoming: medical providers' acceptance of Medicaid and Medicare patients*.

The WWAMI CHWS was established at the University of Washington in October, 1998 with funding from the Bureau of Health Profession's National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. It is based in the Research Section of the Department of Family Medicine, part of the University Of Washington School Of Medicine.

The data snapshots and report, as well as several other healthcare workforce resources, are on the WWAMI CHWS website: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwchws/chws-publications.php>.

Cheyenne Regional Hospital's Community Assessment project:

On behalf of the Healthier Laramie County Action Team, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center secured a grant from the Wyoming Department of Health, Division of Rural and Frontier Health, to conduct a needs assessment of the healthcare safety-net serving low-income/uninsured residents of Laramie County. This population includes residents whose income is 200% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), have no health insurance, or those who have insurance but reported that there was a time in the last year when they were not able to obtain healthcare due to the cost.

Within this assessment, demographic, economic, health reform and health status background is provided, along with a summary of the needs found in the community, and an inventory of services provided currently.

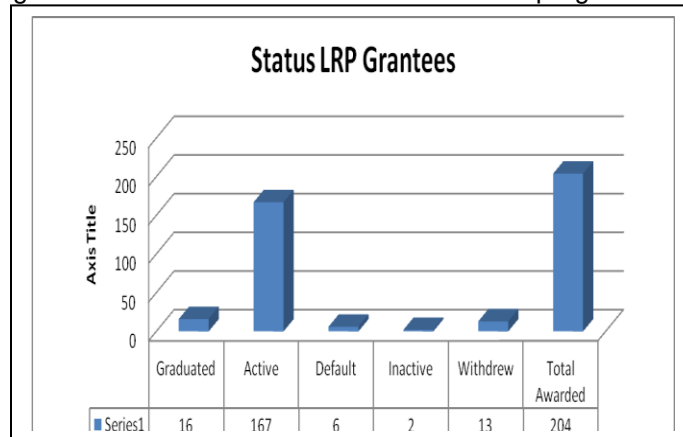
A section of the assessment is devoted to recommendations for improving the services to match up with the needs of the low-income/uninsured/underinsured population of Laramie County.

Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program:

97% of the healthcare professionals given awards are still active in the program or graduated, and still practicing in Wyoming. What a great success!

This program attracts healthcare professionals in over 50 professions to Wyoming. The program reimburses physicians and dentists up to \$90,000 for educational loans. It also reimburses allied healthcare professionals up to \$30,000 for educational loans. There are three primary requirements: Full time employment in the chosen profession; must treat Medicare, Medicaid, and Kid Care patients; and they must use the money to repay student loans. Wyoming Statutes 9-2-118 and 9-2-119 created this program.

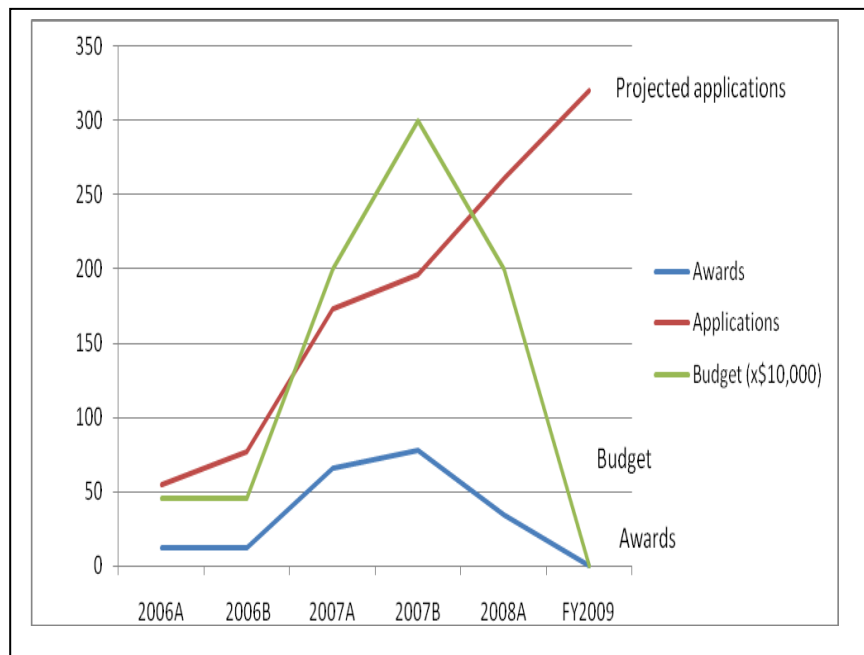
This graph shows the total number of awards made and the number of healthcare professionals in each of five statuses. The six in default have either repaid or are currently repaying the program. Of the 12 that withdrew, 9 withdrew before the first payment, one due to participation in the National Health Service Corps program that does not allow participation in another program simultaneously.



If the healthcare professionals who withdrew prior to their first payment are not counted, then 97% of the healthcare professionals given awards are still active or graduated, and still practicing in Wyoming. Nearly half (99) of the 204 total awards went to graduates of a Wyoming college. What a great success!

The graph shows the number of applications, awards, and budget for each application period since the program began. Fiscal Year 2009 did not have an application period due to funding.

Funding for the next biennium will be determined by the upcoming legislative session.



For more information, contact the Program Manager, Jeff Hopkins, at 307-777-2930; Email:

Jeff.Hopkins@health.wyo.gov. More information is available on-line at: <http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html>, including a list of awards in each county.

Emerging Wyoming Rural Health Leader among First to Complete National Leadership Development Program:

Sharla Allen, Manager of the Wyoming Office of Rural Health and Deputy Administrator for the Rural and Frontier Health Division of the Wyoming Department of Health, is one of the first graduates of the National Organization of State Office of Rural Health's (NOSORH) Leadership Institute. Graduates of the Leadership Institute's inaugural class were recognized on November 19, 2009, during the NOSORH 2009 Annual Meeting being held in Austin, Texas.

NOSORH was created in 1995 to serve as an influential voice for rural health concerns and promote a healthy rural America through state and community leadership. The organization launched its Leadership Institute earlier this year in an effort to enhance the leadership and management skills of emerging and established employees of State Offices of Rural Health. Doing so will equip these emerging leaders to respond more effectively to the rural health needs of the communities and states which they serve.

In order to graduate from the program, class members are expected to participate in seven Webinars, attend a capstone workshop held in conjunction with the NOSORH Annual Meeting, and complete a rural health project utilizing the leadership skills they developed throughout the Institute. Each participant benefits from the mentoring they received from established national rural health leader throughout the program.

Mrs. Allen has worked in healthcare for over 20 years in direct services, medical equipment manufacturing, state government, and nonprofit venues. Most of her time has been spent in the rural health and reproductive health fields.

Mrs. Allen earned her baccalaureate degree in business administration from the University of Wyoming and her masters in health administration from the University of Colorado at Denver, where she received the Outstanding Female Graduate Award from the Colorado Women's Forum in Health Administration. She currently serves on the Laramie County Adolescent Health Board of Directors, the Wyoming Department of Health Workplace Wellness Program, and was co-chair of this year's Wyoming Department of Health Relay for Life team.

Wyoming's Nomination for Mentoring Award Wins!:

Pat Carr, director of the Alaska Office of Rural Health and chief of the Alaska Section of Health Planning and Systems Development, received NOSORH's 2009 James D. Bernstein Mentoring Award. The award – named in memory of Jim Bernstein, a rural health pioneer who formed the first state office of rural health in the United States (in North Carolina) – is given to a long-time rural health leader who has gone “above and beyond the call of duty” to mentor emerging rural health leaders. Pat was nominated for this award by the Wyoming Office of Rural Health for her work with the Wyoming Office of Rural Health. Pat provided on-site technical assistance to the ORH and recommendations to align the small staff with the federal and state programs the ORH is responsible for.

Congratulations, Sharla and Pat!



National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Applying to the Loan Repayment Program just got easier!:

NHSC has over \$200,000,000 for this program!

Am I Eligible?

- U.S. citizen or national
- Trained and credentialed in an eligible primary care discipline:
 1. Allopathic (MD) or Osteopathic (DO) Physician
 2. Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
 3. Certified Nurse-Midwife
 4. Primary Care Physician Assistant
 5. Dentist
 6. Dental Hygienist
 7. Health Service Psychologist
 8. Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 9. Psychiatric Nurse Specialist
 10. Marriage and Family Therapist
 11. Licensed Professional Counselor

<http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/HPSA.html> is a link to maps showing all Wyoming areas eligible to participate. Click on the maps that pertain to your professions.

All of Wyoming's mental health professionals in the above professions with student loan debt are eligible to apply and participate. The employment site must complete an application also.

Who should you inform of these opportunities?

- Soon-to-graduate students who are looking for job opportunities
- Clinicians currently in the field who are interested in the Loan Repayment Program and are sensitive to the mission of NHSC
- Health professions alumni groups that provide employment opportunities to their alumni
- Clinical Site Administrators who are looking for ways to recruit dedicated health professionals
- Your partnering organizations who are committed to connecting dedicated clinicians to the groups of Americans who are in desperate need of primary care

Attached to this email is an announcement you can use to communicate the specific changes to the NHSC application process. We appreciate your partnership. The new Loan Repayment Program (LRP) Application can be found at <https://lrpbcrs.hrsa.gov>. Links to the new Application Information Bulletin (AIB) and forms can be found at <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment>.

The Wyoming Primary Care Office within the Office of Rural Health is able to answer many of your questions. Please contact Jeff Hopkins at (307) 777 2930 or email Jeff.Hopkins@health.wyo.gov for additional information.

An additional six (6) loan repayment programs and over 200 scholarships for many other healthcare professions are available at this website: http://www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/Workforce_Development.html or you can call Jeff Hopkins on these programs for additional information.

Multicultural Health (WOMH)

Trauma Informed System of Care Conference:

The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Wyoming Department of Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division, Rural and Frontier Health Division, and Office of Multicultural Health are proud to present the Creating Respectful and Trauma Informed System of Care for Human Service Settings Conference. The goal of this conference is to promote a dynamic learning exchange arising from the growing recognition of psychological trauma as a pivotal force that shapes the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of those seeking healing and recovery with the support of mental health and human services. We encourage all professionals working with mental health, substance abuse, or legal or educational systems to attend. For conference and registration information go to: <http://wdh.state.wy.us/rfhd/multicultural/index.html>.

Community Services Programs (CSP)

What We Do:

- Distribute over \$3 million annually in federal Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding to 200 local non-profit service providers which afford basic and emergency services to move low-income families toward self sufficiency.
- Distribute nearly \$200,000 annually in federal Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds to provide emergency shelter and supportive services for 2,500 homeless or at-risk-for-homelessness individuals in Wyoming.
- Distribute approximately \$750,000 annually in state funds to reimburse medical, insurance, and transportation costs for 120 low-income applicants diagnosed with renal disease, through coordination with nine local and two out-of-state dialysis centers.
- Provide education and awareness regarding organ donation via donations received from vehicle registrations.

Vital Statistics Services (VSS)

Electronic Vital Records Are Being Developed Throughout The Nation:

- **No paper**
- **No delivery to office for signatures**
- **Can be accessed by assigned users from any computer with internet access**
- **Birth and death records can be completely quickly**

Wyoming Vital Statistics Services, a program within the Division of Rural and Frontier Health, is currently developing a new electronic registration system to file vital records to include, birth, death, marriage, divorce, amendments, and adoptions. The electronic system is used by funeral homes, coroners, hospitals, physicians, county clerks, and county court clerks.

Associated data of vital events are entered into the electronic program and develops permanent records. Because the system is a Web application, this entry can be performed at any computer with Internet access. Signatures are electronic through the use of assigned user identifications and personal passwords. Paper records for ink signatures are unnecessary. Registrants sign the electronic records electronically with no need to physically deliver documents to hospitals, clinics, doctor's or coroner's offices, or funeral homes.

Births occurring away from a hospital setting can be filed using the paper form, if necessary. Also, paternity forms and marriage licenses will continue to be paper-based because the physical signatures cannot be electronic.



The staff of the Rural and Frontier Health Division wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

RECENT NEWS:

Remote Pharmacy Services Offer Quality Assurance

by Candi Helseth

Remote pharmacies can offer services and oversight to rural hospitals without full-time pharmacists.

340B Program Offers Reduced Rate Prescription Drugs to Rural Communities

The 340B Drug Pricing Program lets rural hospitals save on outpatient drugs.

Poverty Rate Jumps in Rural America

Nov 23, 2009 -- Daily Yonder article tells how the difference in poverty rates between rural and urban counties narrowed in the 1990s and through the first few years of this century, but from 2003 to 2008, however, poverty rates in rural America jumped.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

Rural Pharmacies Struggle to Survive

by Candi Helseth

Although telepharmacy is helping rural pharmacies survive and extend services, they still face challenges from large competitors.

Assets for Independence Demonstration Program

These projects are designed to assist low-income people in becoming economically self-sufficient.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Jun 25, 2010

Sponsor: Administration for Children and Families

2009 Supporting the Safety Net

Funding to support programs that improve access to quality breast diagnostics and access to breast health care for the medically underserved.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis

Sponsor: Avon Foundation

2010 J. Jill Compassion Fund

Grants to provide financial support on a national scale to community-based organizations and/or programs whose mission is that of aiding women and children in need.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Feb 19, 2010

Sponsor: Boston Foundation

340B Drug Pricing Program

Allows certain facilities to purchase prescription and non-prescription medications at reduced cost

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis

Sponsor: Bureau of Primary Health Care

Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) Implementation Funds Program

Funding supports pediatricians in the initial and/or pilot stage of developing and implementing a community-based child health initiative.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Jan 29, 2010

Sponsor: American Academy of Pediatrics

Medicare Incentive Payments in Health Professional Shortage Areas and Physician Scarcity Areas

Medicare bonus payments to physicians in geographic HPSAs and PSAs.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis

Sponsor: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Regional Community Health Grants Program

This program provides funding focused on reducing disparities in health care among racial and ethnic populations in eligible geographic areas.

Geographic Coverage: Nationwide

Application Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis

Sponsor: Aetna Foundation

Upcoming Events:

- Trauma Informed System of Care Conference, January 14-15, 2010, Gillette, WY
- Rural Health Policy Institute, January 25-27, 2010, Washington, DC
- Annual Rural Health Conference, May 18-21, 2010, Savannah, GA
- Rural Health Clinic Conference, September 28-29, 2010, Kansas City, MO
- Critical Access Hospital Conference, September 29-October 1, 2010, Kansas City, MO

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd